



NOVA SCOTIA AUTOMOBILE DEALERS ASSOCIATION

TestDrive career in auto industry

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For high school students interested in the automotive trade, there's a program they can get involved in that will give them a look at what the career options are like.

Not only will they get to see the trade up close, the program allows them to earn high school co-op credits, log apprenticeship hours and they'll get paid for their summer work placement.

The program is called TestDrive and it's funded by the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA).

The program is carried out by the Automotive Sector Council in partnership with the NSAA, the auto industry, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and regional school boards.

The program is now entering its third year and 20 students are slated to participate this summer, 15 in HRM and five in a pilot expansion to Pictou County, says Whitney Kerr, TestDrive's program manager.

She says the feedback from students about the program has been very positive as it has allowed them to explore their interests and give them important insight about future career options.

"If you're not able to try it, how do you know if you do like it or if you don't?" said Kerr.

She says that for some program participants, even after the program ended, they continued working for the employer, and some have continued on to be youth apprentices or full-on apprentices. One student is even attending NSCC and the employer is picking up the tab.

For employers, participating in the program is a non-traditional way of finding future talent.

"They see the decline in the number of people [interested in working] in the industry, especially young people," said Kerr.

TestDrive is a way for employers to connect directly with youth. Because of the labour shortage



The TestDrive program is a way for employers to connect with, nurture and retain future talent. **123RF**

facing the auto industry, many employees are competing against the highest bidder to retain talent. The TestDrive program is a way for employers to connect with, nurture and retain future talent.

"The employers who are thinking about the future are the ones buying into this program," said Kerr.

One of the employers who has participated in the program is Atlantic Acura. A TestDrive student it worked with stayed on at the dealership as a technician assistant following his summer work term.

"TestDrive is a perfect opportunity for employers to be involved with youth who show an interest in the automotive field. I feel employers will find this program very rewarding and it will be very beneficial in the future for both parties," said Troy Bennett, the dealership's fixed operations manager.

To be eligible for the program,

students must be in Grades 10 or 11, at least 16 years of age by May 1 of the present year, and be part of the public school system.

To prepare for their work term, students complete nine days of safety orientation at NSCC, where they are exposed to the potential hazards of the automotive environment, specific to the automotive service technician, truck and transport, motor vehicle body repair, parts person and auto glass repair trades.

Students are also invited into local establishments to see the wide variety of environments in which they could be working.

During the five-week summer work program, the students complete 200 hours of mentored work experience.

The feedback from the students has been very positive, but for some students, the program helped them realize a career in the automotive industry wasn't for them.

"We see that as being just as valuable an outcome," said Kerr.

For more information or to participate in the TestDrive project, Kerr can be contacted at 1-877-860-3805 or by e-mail at testdrive@automotivesectorcouncil.ca.

SPRING MAINTENANCE TIPS

Potholes are bad for any spring in Nova Scotia, but this year just might take the cake.

One pothole on Inglis Street in Halifax was so bad that you could see the remnants of the old street car line that used to run on the street.

For a vehicle, potholes can cause a laundry list of problems, such as damaging or ruining tires, bending, damaging or breaking wheels, and damaging a vehicle's steering and suspension parts.

Some of the warning signs your vehicle has incurred some damage from potholes is that it is shaking or vibrating, the vehicle

has some new mystery noises or noises that are louder than they were, recurring loss of air pressure in your tires, bends or dents in the wheel rims, and a tendency for the vehicle to pull in a certain direction.

As part of your spring maintenance, be sure to have your mechanic look at those vehicle parts that tend to be impacted by potholes.

As well, get an oil and filter change done, even if the vehicle isn't quite due for one. This is because oil life decreases in cold temperatures (and Nova Scotia certainly had a cold winter).

Your mechanic should also look at the vehicle's air conditioning system, the battery, the vehicle's belts and brakes.

Winters are tough on brakes because road salt can build up on the brake's calipers and cause them to rust, so be sure to have them cleaned and lubricated to prolong their life.

CADEX 2015 another smashing success

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John K. Sutherland is Executive Vice President of the Nova Scotia Automobile Dealers Association.

On April 10, the Nova Scotia Automobile Dealers Association, in conjunction with the publisher of Canadian Auto Dealer magazine, put on the annual CADEX conference, a one-day event for auto dealers that brings

in leading speakers and experts to help dealers better understand what news, developments and trends will be impacting the industry.

The conference continues to grow and it was announced that TD Auto Finance was extending its sponsorship of the event for another three years.

Some of the speakers at this year's conference included the vice president of sales for Subaru Canada Inc., the economist for the Canadian Automobile Dealers Association (CADA), as well as

CADA's president and CEO.

One new wrinkle to this year's event was a panel discussion of three students from the Automotive Business School of Canada.

The students talked about how they came to be interested in studying at the school, why they wanted to work in the auto industry, as well as what kinds of perceptions they encountered from others about their goal to work in the auto industry.

It was very apparent the conference attendees wanted to tap into the insight of these young minds.

A moderator posed a couple of questions to get the ball rolling, but from that point forward, the questions were being supplied by those in the audience and they were furiously writing them down and then handing the questions to the moderator.

The sound of paper being ripped from the notepads was constant during the session and by the end of it, the moderator had a thick stack of paper in his hands.

One of the challenges facing

the auto industry is a shortage of people looking to pursue careers in it.

The industry needs to do a better job of finding young talent and showing them that a career in the auto industry is a good option.

That's why programs such as TestDrive are so critical for helping expose youth to the industry.

The topic of how to get more young people interested in working in the auto industry is one we will continue to explore and take action on.

**FROM PAGE G1:
USED BMW M3**

This is done at a BMW dealer by a trained technician with a special computer scanner device.

Check the convertible top, if equipped, for proper operation and signs of water leaks, damaged seals or signs of hardtop panel contact, which may be visible as damaged or scuffed paint.

Confirm that all rubber seals are present and in good shape — plump and intact, not dried up or cracked.

Cycle the roof between open and closed several times, noting any unwelcome noises or signs of straining.

There's some discussion relating to bad rod bearings inside of the M3's engine, which could

wear out and cause engine failure. This is an expensive repair, and may occur with little to no warning.

Many in the owner's community say that the issue has been blown out of proportion and exaggerated, likely due to failure on some non-stock engines getting plenty of publicity.

Still, shoppers are advised to seek out a model with all service records, and especially, proof of regular oil changes, for maximum peace of mind.

Other reported issues are mainly minor — bad window seals on coupe models could cause the glass to scratch, some interior squeaks and rattles are common, and a wonky brake-light fault system could cause a brake-light 'failure' message to display, even if the brake lights are working.

Have all exterior illumination double-checked to be sure. Drivetrain wise, the V8 looks largely bulletproof so far, though making sure the one you're considering has been treated to all regular maintenance and fluid changes is key to ensuring its long-term durability and reliability.

The M3's transmissions also appear solid too, albeit some programming-related clumsiness from the M-DCT control system, which allows drivers to fine-tune the operation of the dual-clutch transmission (if equipped).

Some owners have had issues with this high-tech gearbox resolved with dealer-installed software updates. If you prefer a manual transmission, stick to your guns.

Listen for any clunking or popping sounds through the rear floor

of the M3 while accelerating hard in first gear, which could indicate a differential mount that needs replacing.

Coax this sound from the M3's rear end by locking into first gear at a low speed, and 'poking' the throttle hard and repeatedly a few times.

Finally, note that many in the owners community note that first year copies of this generation M3 are the most likely to exhibit issues, though most will be electronic in nature.

To ensure you benefit from maximum long-term reliability and durability from your M3, avoid a model with extensive modifications to the engine or suspension.

Especially if the M3 you're considering is 'boosted', or runs altered engine management soft-

ware, seek out another model.

In any case, be sure to take the unit you're considering to a BMW dealer for a pre-purchase inspection.

This might cost \$200 or so, but could reveal a far pricier problem waiting to surface.

The verdict: The M3 owner's community reports that the 2007 to 2013 M3 is a reliable performance machine that's fantastic to drive and free of serious issues.

Common issues are minor and easily identified, not to mention largely electronic and not mechanical in nature.

A model purchased through a certified pre-owned program with full service records is your safest bet.

Ultimately, this looks like a mechanically solid used performance car buy.

**FROM PAGE G1:
GREG ROBAR**

move to the right and stop.

This is not a time to panic. Look at your situation and determine the safest way to deal with the

vehicle or vehicles. An exception would be a multi-lane one way street. If the emergency vehicle is to your right, it would make more sense to move to the left and stop.

It is always a good idea to signal your intention and check the blind spot before moving over and

stopping. This will communicate to the operator that you are responding to them.

Stopping after pulling over is very important. I often see drivers pull over but keep the vehicle rolling. This can affect the operator's judgement of space, espe-

cially if they must deal with other vehicles that are not pulling over.

We also do not know if they must make a turn ahead. By continuing to roll we could block a street or driveway they are turning into.

You never know when someday

an emergency vehicle could be on its way to someone important to you.

They measure their response time in seconds because seconds can save lives.

Let's do our part to get them safely and quickly to their job.